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Playboy Interview with John Lennon and Yoko Ono:
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(...continued)

PLAYBOY: "What about the Bangladesh concert, in which George and other people such as Dylan performed?"

LENNON: "Bangladesh was ca-ca."

PLAYBOY: "You mean because of all the questions that were raised about where the money went?"

LENNON: "Yeah, right. I can't even talk about it, because it's still a problem. You'll have to check with Mother (Yoko) because she knows the ins and outs of it, I don't. But it's all a rip-off. So forget about it. All of you who are reading this, don't bother sending me all that garbage about, 'Just come and save the Indians, come and save the blacks, come and save the war veterans,' Anybody I want to save will be helped through our tithing, which is ten percent of whatever we earn."

PLAYBOY: "But that doesn't compare with what one promoter, Sid Bernstein, said you could raise by giving a world-wide televised concert... playing separately, as individuals, or together, as the Beatles. He estimated you could raise over $200,000,000 in one day."

LENNON: "That was a commercial for Sid Bernstein written with Jewish schmaltz and showbiz and tears, dropping on one knee. It was Al Jolson. OK. So I don't buy that. OK?"

PLAYBOY: "But the fact is, $200,000,000 to a poverty-stricken country in South America..."

LENNON: "Where do people get off saying the Beatles should give $200,000,000 to South America? You know, America has poured billions into places like that. It doesn't mean a damn thing. After they've eaten that meal, then what? It lasts for only a day. After the $200,000,000 is gone, then what? It goes round and round in circles. You can pour money in forever. After Peru, then Harlem, then Britain. There is no one concert. We would have to dedicate the rest of our lives to one world concert tour, and I'm not ready for it. Not in this lifetime, anyway."

(Ono rejoins the conversation)

PLAYBOY: "On the subject of your own wealth, the New York Post recently said you admitted to being worth over $150,000,000 and..."

LENNON: "We never admitted anything."

PLAYBOY: "The Post said you had."

LENNON: "What the Post says... OK, so we are rich; so what?"

PLAYBOY: "The question is, How does that jibe with your political philosophies? You're supposed to be socialists, aren't you?"

LENNON: "In England, there are only two things to be, basically: You are either for the labor movement or for the capitalist movement. Either you become a right-wing Archie Bunker if you are in the class I am in, or you become an instinctive socialist, which I was. That meant I think people should get their false teeth and their health looked after, all the rest of it. But apart from that, I worked for money and I wanted to be rich. So what the hell... if that's a paradox, then I'm a socialist. But I am not anything. What I used to be is guilty about money. That's why I lost it, either by giving it away or by allowing myself to be screwed by so-called managers."

PLAYBOY: "Whatever your politics, you've played the capitalist game very well, parlaying your Beatles royalties into real estate, livestock..."

ONO: "There is no denying that we are still living in the capitalist world. I think that in order to survive and to change the world, you have to take care of yourself first. You have to survive yourself. I used to say to myself, I am the only socialist living here. (laughs) I don't have a penny. It is all John's, so I'm clean. But I was using his money and I had to face that hypocrisy. I used to think that money was obscene, that the artists didn't have to think about money. But to change society, there are two ways to go: through violence or the power of money within the

system. A lot of people in the Sixties went underground and were involved in bombings and other violence. But that is not the way, definitely not for me. So to change the system... even if you are going to become a mayor or something... you need money."

PLAYBOY: "To what extent do you play the game without getting caught up in it... money for the sake of money, in other words?"

ONO: "There is a limit. It would probably be parallel to our level of security. Do you know what I mean? I mean the emotional-security level as well."

PLAYBOY: "Has it reached that level yet?"

ONO: "No, not yet. I don't know. It might have."

PLAYBOY: "You mean with $150,000,000? Is that an accurate estimate?"

ONO: "I don't know what we have. It becomes so complex that you need to have ten accountants working for two years to find out what you have. But let's say that we feel more comfortable now."

PLAYBOY: "How have you chosen to invest your money?"

ONO: "To make money, you have to spend money. But if you are going to make money, you have to make it with love. I love Egyptian art. I make sure to get all the Egyptian things, not for their value but for their magic power. Each piece has a certain magic power. Also with houses. I just buy ones we love, not the ones that people say are good investments."

PLAYBOY: "The papers have made it sound like you are buying up the Atlantic Seaboard."

ONO: "If you saw the houses, you would understand. They have become a good investment, but they are not an investment unless you sell them. We don't intend to sell. Each house is like a historic landmark and they're very beautiful."

PLAYBOY: "Do you actually use all the properties?"

ONO: "Most people have the park to go to and run in... the park is a huge place... but John and I were never able to go to the park together. So we have to create our own parks, you know."

PLAYBOY: "We heard that you own $60,000,000 worth of dairy cows. Can that be true?"

ONO: "I don't know. I'm not a calculator. I'm not going by figures. I'm going by excellence of things."

LENNON: "Sean and I were away for a weekend and Yoko came over to sell this cow and I was joking about it. We hadn't seen her for days; she spent all her time on it. But then I read the paper that said she sold it for a quarter of a million dollars. Only Yoko could sell a cow for that much." (laughter)

PLAYBOY: "For an artist, your business sense seems remarkable."

ONO: "I was doing it just as a chess game. I love chess. I do everything like it's a chess game. Not on a Monopoly level... that's a bit more realistic. Chess is more conceptual."

PLAYBOY: "John, do you really need all those houses around the country?"

LENNON: "They're good business."

PLAYBOY: "Why does anyone need $150,000,000? Couldn't you be perfectly content with $100,000,000? Or $1,000,000?"

LENNON: "What would you suggest I do? Give everything away and walk the streets? The Buddhist says, 'Get rid of the possessions of the mind.' Walking away from all the money would not accomplish that. It's like the Beatles. I couldn't walk away from the Beatles. That's one possession that's still tagging along, right? If I walk away from one house or 400 houses, I'm not gonna escape it."

PLAYBOY: "How do you escape it?"

LENNON: "It takes time to get rid of all this garbage that I've been carrying around that was influencing the way I thought and the way I lived. It had a lot to do with Yoko, showing me that I was still possessed. I left physically when I fell in love with Yoko, but mentally it took the last ten years of struggling. I learned everything from her."

PLAYBOY: "You make it sound like a teacher-pupil relationship."

LENNON: "It is a teacher-pupil relationship. That's what people don't understand. She's the teacher and I'm the pupil. I'm the famous one, the one who's supposed to know everything, but she's my teacher. She's taught me everything I fucking know. She was there when I was nowhere, when I was the nowhere man. She's my Don Juan." (a reference to Carlos Castaneda's Yaqui Indian teacher) "That's what people don't understand. I'm married to fucking Don Juan, that's the hardship of it. Don Juan doesn't have to laugh; Don Juan doesn't have to be charming; Don Juan just is. And what goes on around Don Juan is irrelevant to Don Juan."

PLAYBOY: "Yoko, how do you feel about being John's teacher?"

ONO: "Well, he had a lot of experience before he met me, the kind of experience I never had, so I learned a lot from him, too. It's both ways. Maybe it's that I have strength, a feminine strength. Because women develop it... in a relationship, I think women really have the inner wisdom and they're carrying that while men have sort of the wisdom to cope with society, since they created it. Men never developed the inner wisdom; they didn't have time. So most men do rely on women's inner wisdom, whether they express that or not."

PLAYBOY: "Is Yoko John's guru?"

LENNON: "No, a Don Juan doesn't have a following. A Don Juan isn't in the newspaper and doesn't have disciples and doesn't proselytize."

PLAYBOY: "How has she taught you?"

LENNON: "When Don Juan said ...when Don Ono said, 'Get out! Because you're not getting it,' well, it was like being sent into the desert. And the reason she wouldn't let me back in was because I wasn't ready to come back in. I had to settle things within myself. When I was ready to come back in, she let me back in. And that's what I'm living with."

PLAYBOY: "You're talking about your separation."

LENNON: "Yes. We were separated in the early Seventies. She kicked me out. Suddenly, I was on a raft alone in the middle of the universe."

PLAYBOY: "What happened?"

LENNON: "Well, at first, I thought, Whoopee, whoopee! You know, bachelor life! Whoopee! And then I woke up one day and I thought, What is this? I want to go home! But she wouldn't let me come home. That's why it was 18 months apart instead of six months. We were talking all the time on the phone and I would say, 'I don't like this, I'm getting in trouble and I'd like to come home, please.' And she would say, 'You're not ready to come home.' So what do you say? OK, back to the bottle."

PLAYBOY: "What did she mean, you weren't ready?"

LENNON: "She has her ways. Whether they be mystical or practical. When she said it's not ready, it ain't ready."

PLAYBOY: "Back to the bottle?"

LENNON: "I was just trying to hide what I felt in the bottle. I was just insane. It was the lost weekend that lasted 18 months. I've never drunk so much in my life. I tried to drown myself in the bottle and I was with the heaviest drinkers in the business."

PLAYBOY: "Such as?"

LENNON: "Such as Harry Nilsson, Bobby Keyes, Keith Moon. We couldn't pull ourselves out. We were trying to kill ourselves. I think Harry might still be trying, poor bugger... God bless you, Harry, wherever you are... but, Jesus, you know, I had to get away from that, because somebody was going to die. Well, Keith did. It was like, who's going to die first? Unfortunately, Keith was the one."

PLAYBOY: "Why the self-destruction?"

LENNON: "For me, it was because of being apart. I couldn't stand it. They had their own reasons, and it was, Let's all drown ourselves together. From where I was sitting, it looked like that. Let's kill ourselves but do it like Errol Flynn, you know, the macho, male way. It's embarrassing for me to think about that period, because I made a big fool of myself... but maybe it was a good lesson for me. I wrote 'Nobody Loves You When You're Down and Out' during that time. That's how I felt. It exactly expresses the whole period. For some reason, I always imagined Sinatra singing that one. I don't know why. It's kind of a Sinatraesque song, really. He would do a perfect job with it. Are you listening, Frank? You need a song that isn't a piece of nothing. Here's the one for you, the horn arrangement and everything's made for you. But don't ask me to produce it."

PLAYBOY: "That must have been the time the papers came out with reports about Lennon running around town with a Tampax on his head."

LENNON: "The stories were all so exaggerated, but... We were all in a restaurant, drinking, not eating, as usual at those gatherings, and I happened to go take a pee and there was a brand-new fresh Kotex, not Tampax, on the toilet. You know the old trick where you put a penny on your forehead and it sticks? I was a little high and I just picked it up and slapped it on and it stayed, you see. I walked out of the bathroom and I had a Kotex on my head. Big deal. Everybody went 'Ha-ha-ha' and it fell off, but the press blew it up."

PLAYBOY: "Why did you kick John out, Yoko?"

ONO: "There were many things. I'm what I call a 'moving on' kind of girl; there's a song on our new album about it. Rather than deal with problems in relationships, I've always moved on. That's

why I'm one of the very few survivors as a woman, you know. Women tend to be more into men usually, but I wasn't..."

LENNON: "Yoko looks upon men as assistants... Of varying degrees of intimacy, but basically assistants. And this one's going to take a pee." (he exits)

ONO: "I have no comment on that. But when I met John, women to him were basically people around who were serving him. He had to open himself up and face me... and I had to see what he was going through. But I thought I had to move on again, because I was suffering being with John."

PLAYBOY: "Why?"

ONO: "The pressure from the public, being the one who broke up the Beatles and who made it impossible for them to get back together. My artwork suffered, too. I thought I wanted to be free from being Mrs. Lennon, so I thought it would be a good idea for him to go to L.A. and leave me alone for a while. I had put up with it for many years. Even early on, when John was a Beatle, we stayed in a room and John and I were in bed and the door was closed and all that, but we didn't lock the door and one of the Beatle assistants just walked in and talked to him as if I weren't there. It was mind-blowing. I was invisible. The people around John saw me as a terrible threat. I mean, I heard there were plans to kill me. Not the Beatles but the people around them."

PLAYBOY: "How did that news affect you?"

ONO: "The society doesn't understand that the woman can be castrated, too. I felt castrated. Before, I was doing all right, thank you. My work might not have been selling much, I might have been poorer, but I had my pride. But the most humiliating thing is to be looked at as a parasite."

(Lennon rejoins the conversation)

LENNON: "When Yoko and I started doing stuff together, we would hold press conferences and announce our whatevers... we're going to wear bags or whatever. And before this one press conference, one Beatle assistant in the upper echelon of Beatle assistants leaned over to Yoko and said, You know, you don't have to work. You've got enough money, now that you're Mrs. Lennon.' And when she complained to me about it, I couldn't understand what she was talking about. 'But this guy,' I'd say, 'He's just good old Charley, or whatever. He's been with us 20 years...' The same kind of thing happened in the studio. She would say to an engineer, 'I'd like a little more treble, a little more bass,' or 'There's too much of whatever you're putting on,' and

they'd look at me and say, 'What did you say, John?' Those days I didn't even notice it myself. Now I know what she's talking about. In Japan, when I ask for a cup of tea in Japanese, they look at Yoko and ask, 'He wants a cup of tea?' in Japanese."

ONO: "So a good few years of that kind of thing emasculates you. I had always been more macho than most guys I was with, in a sense. I had always been the breadwinner, because I always wanted to have the freedom and the control. Suddenly, I'm with somebody I can't possibly compete with on a level of earnings. Finally, I couldn't take it... or I decided not to take it any longer. I would have had the same difficulty even if I hadn't gotten involved with, ah...."

LENNON: "John-- John is the name."

ONO: "With John. But John wasn't just John. He was also his group and the people around them. When I say John, it's not just John..."

LENNON: "That's John. J-O-H-N. From Johan, I believe."

PLAYBOY: "So you made him leave?"

ONO: "Yes."

LENNON: She don't suffer fools gladly, even if she's married to him."

PLAYBOY: "How did you finally get back together?"

ONO: "It slowly started to dawn on me that John was not the trouble at all. John was a fine person. It was society that had become too much. We laugh about it now, but we started dating again. I wanted to be sure. I'm thankful to John's intelligence..."

LENNON: "Now, get that, editors... you got that word?"

ONO: "...that he was intelligent enough to know this was the only way that we could save our marriage, not because we didn't love each other but because it was getting too much for me. Nothing would have changed if I had come back as Mrs. Lennon again."

PLAYBOY: "What did change?"

ONO: "It was good for me to do the business and regain my pride about what I could do. And it was good to know what he needed, the role reversal that was so good for him."

LENNON: "And we learned that it's better for the family if we are both working for the family, she doing the business and me playing mother and wife. We reordered our priorities. The

number-one priority is her and the family. Everything else revolves around that."

ONO: "It's a hard realization. These days, the society prefers single people. The encouragements are to divorce or separate or be single or gay... whatever. Corporations want singles-- they work harder if they don't have family ties. They don't have to worry about being home in the evenings or on the weekends. There's not much room for emotions about family or personal relationships. You know, the whole thing they say to women approaching 30 that if you don't have a baby in the next few years, you're going to be in trouble, you'll never be a mother, so you'll never be fulfilled in that way and..."

LENNON: "Only Yoko was 73 when she had Sean."

(laughter)

ONO: "So instead of the society discouraging children, since they are important for society, it should encourage them. It's the responsibility of everybody. But it is hard. A woman has to deny what she has, her womb, if she wants to make it. It seems that only the privileged classes can have families. Nowadays, maybe it's only the McCartneys and the Lennons or something."

LENNON: "Everybody else becomes a worker/consumer."

ONO: "And then Big Brother will decide. I hate to use the term Big Brother..."

LENNON: "Too late. They've got it on tape." (laughs)

ONO: "But, finally, the society..."

LENNON: "Big Sister-- wait till she comes!"

ONO: "The society will do away with the roles of men and women. Babies will be born in test tubes and incubators..."

LENNON: "Then it's Aldous Huxley."

ONO: "But we don't have to go that way. We don't have to deny any of our organs, you know."

LENNON: "Some of my best friends are organs."

ONO: "The new album..."

LENNON: "Back to the album, very good."

ONO: "The album fights these things. The messages are sort of old-fashioned. Family, relationships, children."

PLAYBOY: "The album obviously reflects your new priorities. How have things gone for you since you made that decision?"

LENNON: "We got back together, decided this was our life, that having a baby was important to us and that anything else was subsidiary to that. We worked hard for that child. We went through all hell trying to have a baby, through many miscarriages and other problems. He is what they call a love child in truth. Doctors told us we could never have a child. We almost gave up. 'Well, that's it, then, we can't have one.' We were told something was wrong with my sperm, that I abused myself so much in my youth that there was no chance. Yoko was 43, and so they said, no way. She has had too many miscarriages and when she was a young girl, there were no pills, so there were lots of abortions and miscarriages; her stomach must be like Kew Gardens in London. No way. But this Chinese acupuncturist in San Francisco said, 'You behave yourself. No drugs, eat well, no drink. You have child in 18 months.' And we said, 'But the English doctors said...' He said, 'Forget what they said. You have child.' We had Sean and sent the acupuncturist a Polaroid of him just before he died, God rest his soul."

PLAYBOY: "Were there any problems because of Yoko's age?"

LENNON: "Not because of her age but because of a screw-up in the hospital and the fucking price of fame. Somebody had made a transfusion of the wrong blood type into Yoko. I was there when it happened, and she starts to go rigid, and then shake, from the pain and the trauma. I run up to this nurse and say, 'Go get the doctor!' I'm holding on tight to Yoko while this guy gets to the hospital room. He walks in, hardly notices that Yoko is going through fucking convulsions, goes straight for me, smiles, shakes my hand and says, 'I've always wanted to meet you, Mr. Lennon, I always enjoyed your music.' I start screaming: 'My wife's dying and you wanna talk about my music!' Christ!"

PLAYBOY: "Now that Sean is almost five, is he conscious of the fact that his father was a Beatle or have you protected him from your fame?"

LENNON: "I haven't said anything. Beatles were never mentioned to him. There was no reason to mention it; we never played Beatle records around the house, unlike the story that went around that I was sitting in the kitchen for the past five years, playing Beatle records and reliving my past like some kind of Howard Hughes. He did see 'Yellow Submarine' at a friend's, so I had to explain what a cartoon of me was doing in a movie."

PLAYBOY: "Does he have an awareness of the Beatles?"

LENNON: "He doesn't differentiate between the Beatles and Daddy and Mommy. He thinks Yoko was a Beatle, too. I don't have Beatle records on the jukebox he listens to. He's more exposed to early rock 'n roll. He's into 'Hound Dog.' He thinks it's about hunting. Sean's not going to public school, by the way. We feel he can learn the three Rs when he wants to... or when the law says he has to, I suppose. I'm not going to fight it. Otherwise, there's no reason for him to be learning to sit still. I can't see any reason for it. Sean now has plenty of child companionship, which everybody says is important, but he also is with adults a lot. He's adjusted to both. The reason why kids are crazy is because nobody can face the responsibility of bringing them up. Everybody's too scared to deal with children all the time, so we reject them and send them away and torture them. The ones who survive are the conformists. Their bodies are cut to the size of the suits... the ones we label good. The ones who don't fit the suits either are put in mental homes or become artists."

PLAYBOY: "Your son, Julian, from your first marriage must be in his teens. Have you seen him over the years?"

LENNON: "Well, Cyn got possession, or whatever you call it. I got rights to see him on his holidays and all that business, and at least there's an open line still going. It's not the best relationship between father and son, but it is there. He's 17 now. Julian and I will have a relationship in the future. Over the years, he's been able to see through the Beatle image and to see through the image that his mother will have given him, subconsciously or consciously. He's interested in girls and autobikes now. I'm just sort of a figure in the sky, but he's obliged to communicate with me, even when he probably doesn't want to."

PLAYBOY: "You're being very honest about your feelings toward him to the point of saying that Sean is your first child. Are you concerned about hurting him?"

LENNON: "I'm not going to lie to Julian. Ninety percent of the people on this planet, especially in the West, were born out of a bottle of whiskey on a Saturday night, and there was no intent to have children. So 90 percent of us... that includes everybody... were accidents. I don't know anybody who was a planned child. All of us were Saturday-night specials. Julian is in the majority, along with me and everybody else. Sean is a planned child, and therein lies the difference. I don't love Julian any less as a child. He's still my son, whether he came from a bottle of whiskey or because they didn't have pills in those days. He's here, he belongs to me and he always will."

PLAYBOY: "Yoko, your relationship with your daughter has been much rockier."

ONO: "I lost Kyoko when she was about five. I was sort of an offbeat mother, but we had very good communication. I wasn't particularly taking care of her, but she was always with me... onstage or at gallery shows, whatever. When she was not even a year old, I took her onstage as an instrument-- an uncontrollable instrument, you know. My communication with her was on the level of sharing conversation and doing things. She was closer to my ex-husband because of that."

PLAYBOY: "What happened when she was five?"

ONO: "John and I got together and I separated from my ex-husband." (Tony Cox) "He took Kyoko away. It became a case of parent kidnapping and we tried to get her back."

LENNON: "It was a classic case of men being macho. It turned into me and Allen Klein trying to dominate Tony Cox. Tony's attitude was, 'You got my wife, but you won't get my child.' In this battle, Yoko and the child were absolutely forgotten. I've always felt bad about it. It became a case of the shoot-out at the O.K. Corral: Cox fled to the hills and hid out and the sheriff and I tracked him down. First we won custody in court. Yoko didn't want to go to court, but the men, Klein and I, did it anyway."

ONO: "Allen called up one day, saying I won the court case. He gave me a piece of paper. I said, 'What is this piece of paper? Is this what I won? I don't have my child.' I knew that taking them to court would frighten them and, of course, it did frighten them. So Tony vanished. He was very strong, thinking that the capitalists, with their money and lawyers and detectives, were pursuing him. It made him stronger."

LENNON: "We chased him all over the world. God knows where he went. So if you're reading this, Tony, let's grow up about it. It's gone. We don't want to chase you anymore, because we've done enough damage."

ONO: "We also had private detectives chasing Kyoko, which I thought was a bad trip, too. One guy came to report, 'It was great! We almost had them. We were just behind them in a car, but they sped up and got away.' I went hysterical. 'What do you mean you almost got them? We are talking about my child!'"

LENNON: "It was like we were after an escaped convict."

PLAYBOY: "Were you so persistent because you felt you were better for Kyoko?"

LENNON: "Yoko got steamed into a guilt thing that if she wasn't attacking them with detectives and police and the FBI, then she wasn't a good mother looking for her baby. She kept saying,

'Leave them alone, leave them alone,' but they said you can't do that."

ONO: "For me, it was like they just disappeared from my life. Part of me left with them."

PLAYBOY: "How old is she now?"

ONO: "Seventeen, the same as John's son."

PLAYBOY: "Perhaps when she gets older, she'll seek you out."

ONO: "She is totally frightened. There was a time in Spain when a lawyer and John thought that we should kidnap her."

LENNON: (sighing) "I was just going to commit hara-kiri first."

ONO: "And we did kidnap her and went to court. The court did a very sensible thing... the judge took her into a room and asked her which one of us she wanted to go with. Of course, she said Tony. We had scared her to death. So now she must be afraid that if she comes to see me, she'll never see her father again."

LENNON: "When she gets to be in her 20's, she'll understand that we were idiots and we know we were idiots. She might give us a chance."

ONO: "I probably would have lost Kyoko even if it wasn't for John. If I had separated from Tony, there would have been some difficulty."

LENNON: "I'll just half-kill myself."

ONO: (to John) "Part of the reason things got so bad was because with Kyoko, it was you and Tony dealing. Men. With your son Julian, it was women... there was more understanding between me and Cyn."

PLAYBOY: "Can you explain that?"

ONO: "For example, there was a birthday party that Kyoko had and we were both invited, but John felt very uptight about it and he didn't go. He wouldn't deal with Tony. But we were both invited to Julian's party and we both went."

LENNON: "Oh, God, it's all coming out."

ONO: "Or like when I was invited to Tony's place alone, I couldn't go; but when John was invited to Cyn's, he did go."

LENNON: "One rule for the men, one for the women."

ONO: "So it was easier for Julian, because I was allowing it to happen."

LENNON: "But I've said a million Hail Marys. What the hell else can I do?"

PLAYBOY: "Yoko, after this experience, how do you feel about leaving Sean's rearing to John?"

ONO: "I am very clear about my emotions in that area. I don't feel guilty. I am doing it in my own way. It may not be the same as other mothers, but I'm doing it the way I can do it. In general, mothers have a very strong resentment toward their children, even though there's this whole adulation about motherhood and how mothers really think about their children and how they really love them. I mean, they do, but it is not humanly possible to retain emotion that mothers are supposed to have within this society. Women are just too stretched out in different directions to retain that emotion. Too much is required of them. So I say to John..."

LENNON: "I am her favorite husband..."

ONO: "'I am carrying the baby nine months and that is enough, so you take care of it afterward.' It did sound like a crude remark, but I really believe that children belong to the society. If a mother carries the child and a father raises it, the responsibility is shared."

PLAYBOY: "Did you resent having to take so much responsibility, John?"

LENNON: "Well, sometimes, you know, she'd come home and say, 'I'm tired.' I'd say, only partly tongue in cheek, What the fuck do you think I am? I'm 24 hours with the baby! Do you think that's easy?' I'd say, 'You're going to take some more interest in the child.' I don't care whether it's a father or a mother. When I'm going on about pimples and bones and which TV shows to let him watch, I would say, 'Listen, this is important. I don't want to hear about your $20,000,000 deal tonight!' (to Yoko) I would like both parents to take care of the children, but 'how' is a different matter."

ONO: "Society should be more supportive and understanding."

LENNON: "It's true. The saying 'You've come a long way, baby' applies more to me than to her. As Harry Nilsson says, 'Everything is the opposite of what it is, isn't it?' It's men who've come a long way from even contemplating the idea of equality. But although there is this thing called the women's movement, society just took a laxative and they've just farted. They haven't

really had a good shit yet. The seed was planted sometime in the late Sixties, right? But the real changes are coming. I am the one who has come a long way. I was the pig. And it is a relief not to be a pig. The pressures of being a pig were enormous. I don't have any hankering to be looked upon as a sex object, a male, macho rock 'n roll singer. I got over that a long time ago. I'm not even interested in projecting that. So I like it to be known that, yes, I looked after the baby and I made bread and I was a househusband and I am proud of it. It's the wave of the future and I'm glad to be in on the forefront of that, too."

ONO: "So maybe both of us learned a lot about how men and women suffer because of the social structure. And the only way to change it is to be aware of it. It sounds simple, but important things are simple."

PLAYBOY: "John, does it take actually reversing roles with women to understand?"

LENNON: "It did for this man. But don't forget, I'm the one who benefited the most from doing it. Now I can step back and say Sean is going to be five years old and I was able to spend his first five years with him and I am very proud of that. And come to think of it, it looks like I'm going to be 40 and life begins at 40-- so they promise. And I believe it, too. I feel fine and I'm very excited. It's like, you know, hitting 21, like, 'Wow, what's going to happen next?' Only this time we're together.

ONO: "If two are gathered together, there's nothing you can't do."

PLAYBOY: "What does the title of your new album, 'Double Fantasy,' mean?"

LENNON: "It's a flower, a type of freesia, but what it means to us is that if two people picture the same image at the same time, that is the secret. You can be together but projecting two different images and either whoever's the stronger at the time will get his or her fantasy fulfilled or you will get nothing but mishmash."

PLAYBOY: "You saw the news item that said you were putting your sex fantasies out as an album."

LENNON: "Oh, yeah. That is like when we did the bed-in in Toronto in 1969. They all came charging through the door, thinking we were going to be screwing in bed. Of course, we were just sitting there with peace signs."

PLAYBOY: "What was that famous bed-in all about?"

LENNON: "Our life is our art. That's what the bed-ins were. When we got married, we knew our honeymoon was going to be

public, anyway, so we decided to use it to make a statement. We sat in bed and talked to reporters for seven days. It was hilarious. In effect, we were doing a commercial for peace on the front page of the papers instead of a commercial for war."

PLAYBOY: "You stayed in bed and talked about peace?"

LENNON: "Yes. We answered questions. One guy kept going over the point about Hitler: 'What do you do about Fascists? How can you have peace when you've got a Hitler?' Yoko said, 'I would have gone to bed with him.' She said she'd have needed only ten days with him. People loved that one."

ONO: "I said it facetiously, of course. But the point is, you're not going to change the world by fighting. Maybe I was naive about the ten days with Hitler. After all, it took 13 years with John Lennon." (she giggles)

PLAYBOY: "What were the reports about your making love in a bag?"

ONO: "We never made love in a bag. People probably imagined that we were making love. It was just, all of us are in a bag, you know. The point was the outline of the bag, you know, the movement of the bag, how much we see of a person, you know. But, inside, there might be a lot going on. Or maybe nothing's going on."

PLAYBOY: "Briefly, what about the statement on the new album?"

LENNON: "Very briefly, it's about very ordinary things between two people. The lyrics are direct. Simple and straight. I went through my Dylanesque period a long time ago with songs like 'I am the Walrus' ...the trick of never saying what you mean but giving the impression of something more. Where more or less can be read into it. It's a good game."

PLAYBOY: "What are your musical preferences these days?"

LENNON: "Well, I like all music, depending on what time of day it is. I don't like styles of music or people per se. I can't say I enjoy the Pretenders, but I like their hit record. I enjoy the B-52s, because I heard them doing Yoko. It's great. If Yoko ever goes back to her old sound, they'll be saying, 'Yeah, she's copying the B-52s.'"

ONO: "We were doing a lot of the punk stuff a long time ago."

PLAYBOY: "Lennon and Ono, the original punks."

ONO: "You're right."

PLAYBOY: "John, what's your opinion of the newer waves?"

LENNON: "I love all this punky stuff. It's pure. I'm not, however, crazy about the people who destroy themselves."

PLAYBOY: "You disagree with Neil Young's lyric in 'Rust Never Sleeps'-- 'It's better to burn out than to fade away....'"

LENNON: "I hate it. It's better to fade away like an old soldier than to burn out. I don't appreciate worship of dead Sid Vicious or of dead James Dean or of dead John Wayne. It's the same thing. Making Sid Vicious a hero, Jim Morrison ...it's garbage to me. I worship the people who survive. Gloria Swanson, Greta Garbo. They're saying John Wayne conquered cancer... he whipped it like a man. You know, I'm sorry that he died and all that. I'm sorry for his family, but he didn't whip cancer. It whipped him. I don't want Sean worshiping John Wayne or Sid Vicious. What do they teach you? Nothing. Death. Sid Vicious died for what? So that we might rock? I mean, it's garbage, you know. If Neil Young admires that sentiment so much, why doesn't he do it? Because he sure as hell faded away and came back many times, like all of us. No, thank you. I'll take the living and the healthy."

PLAYBOY: "Do you listen to the radio?"

LENNON: "Muzak or classical. I don't purchase records. I do enjoy listening to things like Japanese folk music or Indian music. My tastes are very broad. When I was a housewife, I just had Muzak on, background music, 'cuz it relaxes you."

PLAYBOY: "Yoko?"

ONO: "No."

PLAYBOY: "Do you go out and buy records?"

ONO: "Or read the newspaper or magazines or watch TV? No."

PLAYBOY: "The inevitable question, John. Do you listen to your records?"

LENNON: "Least of all my own."

PLAYBOY: "Even your classics?"

LENNON: "Are you kidding? For pleasure, I would never listen to them. When I hear them, I just think of the session. It's like an actor watching himself in an old movie. When I hear a song, I remember the Abbey Road studio, the session, who fought with

whom, where I was sitting, banging the tambourine in the corner..."

ONO: "In fact, we really don't enjoy listening to other people's work much. We sort of analyze everything we hear."

PLAYBOY: "Yoko, were you a Beatles fan?"

ONO: "No. Now I notice the songs, of course. In a restaurant, John will point out, 'Ahh, they're playing George' or something."

PLAYBOY: "John, do you ever go out to hear music?"

LENNON: "No, I'm not interested. I'm not a fan, you see. I might like Jerry Lee Lewis singing 'A Whole Lot a Shakin' on the record, but I'm not interested in seeing him perform it."

PLAYBOY: "Your songs are performed more than most other songwriters. How does that feel?"

LENNON: "I'm always proud and pleased when people do my songs. It gives me pleasure that they even attempt them, because a lot of my songs aren't that doable. I go to restaurants and the groups always play 'Yesterday.' I even signed a guy's violin in Spain after he played us 'Yesterday.' He couldn't understand that I didn't write the song. But I guess he couldn't have gone from table to table playing 'I am the Walrus.'"

PLAYBOY: "How does it feel to have influenced so many people?"

LENNON: "It wasn't really me or us. It was the times. It happened to me when I heard rock 'n roll in the Fifties. I had no idea about doing music as a way of life until rock 'n' roll hit me."

PLAYBOY: "Do you recall what specifically hit you?"

LENNON: "It was 'Rock Around the Clock,' I think. I enjoyed Bill Haley, but I wasn't overwhelmed by him. It wasn't until 'Heartbreak Hotel' that I really got into it."

ONO: "I am sure there are people whose lives were affected because they heard Indian music or Mozart or Bach. More than anything, it was the time and the place when the Beatles came up. Something did happen there. It was a kind of chemical. It was as if several people gathered around a table and a ghost appeared. It was that kind of communication. So they were like mediums, in a way. It's not something you can force. It was the people, the time, their youth and enthusiasm."

PLAYBOY: "For the sake of argument, we'll maintain that no other contemporary artist or group of artists moved as many people in such a profound way as the Beatles."

LENNON: "But what moved the Beatles?"

PLAYBOY: "You tell us."

LENNON: "Alright. Whatever wind was blowing at the time moved the Beatles, too. I'm not saying we weren't flags on the top of a ship; but the whole boat was moving. Maybe the Beatles were in the crow's-nest, shouting, 'Land ho,' or something like that, but we were all in the same damn boat."

ONO: "The Beatles themselves were a social phenomenon not that aware of what they were doing. In a way..."

LENNON: (under his breath) "This Beatles talk bores me to death. Turn to page 196."

ONO: "As I said, they were like mediums. They weren't conscious of all they were saying, but it was coming through them."

PLAYBOY: "Why?"

LENNON: "We tuned in to the message. That's all. I don't mean to belittle the Beatles when I say they weren't this, they weren't that. I'm just trying not to overblow their importance as separate from society. And I don't think they were more important than Glenn Miller or Woody Herman or Bessie Smith. It was our generation, that's all. It was Sixties music."

(...continued)

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